

Prayer List

Sheila
Ophelia
Josh
Daniel
Olene

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 9:50 a.m.
Assembly 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Pinole Tidings

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This Week's Question:

What prophetic book of the Old Testament contains musical directions?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

David - 1 Chronicles 15:1

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"Reading Matthew With A Jewish Mind"

by David Barnes

We all recognize the different perspectives provided by the four Gospels. Matthew was written for Jews, Mark for Romans, Luke for Greeks, John is somewhat different. It is called "The Universal Gospel" as it speaks to a more general gospel of belief by pointing out the deep implication of the life of Christ.

Have you ever tried to read Matthew from a Jewish point of view? I was pointed in this direction about three years ago and it has forever enhanced my appreciation of the book. Consider just a few things...

First, the genealogy. Not only are women mentioned (which was very unusual for typical Jewish genealogies) the women named are a kind of rogues gallery in Jewish history. Rahab the harlot (who was a Canaanite). Tamar (also a Gentile) whose children were the result of an incestuous relationship with her father-in-law Judah. Ruth who was a Moabitess (a Gentile). The Moabites were the results of incests from Lot and his daughters. Take a look

at Deut. 23:3 for more information on Moabites. Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, who sinned with David. Any proper Pharisee would rather forget about these women and the sin they had in their lives.

Second, the wise men who represent the first official deputation to visit the Christ child were Gentiles. Apparently God had moved them or led them to seek out Jesus. They were so unfamiliar with Jewish scripture they needed to inquire as to where the Christ was to be born. The Jewish leaders in Jerusalem never answered an easier question. Every one knew it was Bethlehem! Every Jew might know but Gentiles did not.

Third, not only was the Messiah not recognized by His own people, His family was forced to flee to Egypt, of all places, to save His life! There was no recognition or protection of the promised One by His own people. Upon the return to Israel the family was forced to raise the Child in "Nazareth, Galilee of the Gentiles." How insulting to know the people of God had failed so badly to see their King.

Fourth, the bulk of Matthew's gospel is about Christ's Galilean ministry, not His time in Jerusalem! Matthew begins the main body of work in 4:12 and basically never leaves until 19:1. This could easily be insulting to Jewish readers. Galilee, because of its close proximity to Gentiles, was repudiated by Jewish leaders (John 7:52).

Fifth, the first miracle Matthew records is found in 8:1-4. Before Jesus cleanses the Leper, or at least during the process, He touches him. He makes Himself ceremonially

unclean! How can He be the Jewish Messiah when He is so willing to defile Himself?

Sixth, the author of the book, Matthew, would be repulsive to Jews (9:9-13). In their eyes the tax collector already repudiated the Law by his occupation. He made himself unclean by his employment by Gentiles and the unclean money he touched every day. Now he further rejects Moses by being the disciple of the Nazarene! What could they possibly learn from this man and any thing he proposed to write?

These are not all the "offenses" in the gospel of Matthew but perhaps these will be sufficient to make our point. Reading Matthew with a Jewish mind helps me understand the book.

In conclusion, there were some major hurdles placed before any Jew who read Matthew. As God knew, the problem was not with Matthew but rather with the smug, self-righteous, self-serving Jew. Unless and until they accepted the message of the publican who became an Apostle, they were lost.

Lest we fail to understand, we have our own hurdles to cross in our race to eternity. By God's grace both Jew and Gentile have been given the good news of a Savior.